INTRODUCTION
Why should parents be concerned?

It's difficult for parents to imagine just how much information is collected about students in schools today, or how that information is used, stored, and shared with others. During the course of a normal school day — and throughout a child's life from kindergarten to graduation from high school — an incredibly large amount of data, including highly sensitive information, is shared without parental knowledge or consent with vendors providing operational services or companies offering educational programs. Rather than secured in a file cabinet or kept on the school's computer servers, personal student information is often transmitted to and stored in the "cloud" to facilitate access and use by third parties. Federal laws intended to protect students' data held by or for schools are simply inadequate to address the challenges of today's digital age.

Parents may never know the full extent of how their children's personal information may have been shared, used, misused, sold, breached, or hacked over the course of their school careers. If their children are denied entrance into the college of their choice, parents may wonder if their students' profiles were sold to universities by the College Board and ACT and used to reject their application. If their children are turned down for their dream jobs, did the employer screen them using an online profile of their internet search history gathered by their school-issued device and bought from data brokers? If their children's identities are stolen, was it the result of an elementary school's data breach many years ago? If their children are denied state services as an adult, could it be because of disciplinary or other incriminating information in their cumulative files held by the state education department and other agencies?

This toolkit is designed to help parents like you navigate these issues, and provide information on your rights and what steps you can take to maximize your children's privacy and safety. As parents understand instinctively, it is your job to protect your children and try to ensure their success in school and life. We hope this toolkit will help you.

Acknowledgments

Questions? Visit www.studentprivacymatters.org/toolkit for more information, including free webinars on how to use the resources in this toolkit.